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In the final section we consider some legends collected by Anne Putnam among these same Mbuti, and observe in them more of the Mbuti attitude to the villagers and how they equate themselves, as humans, with the forest and with "good" animals, as opposed to the villagers who are associated with destructive animals and *satani*.

MBUTI VALUES AS SEEN IN LEGEND

In order to understand the Pygmy values more clearly, and to assess how far the Mbuti rejection of villager values is effectively valid and how far it is merely the psychological reaction of a subordinate people, it is worth considering a collection of nearly 200 legends noted down by Anne Putnam during the last years of her stay in the Ituri. These were all related by four of the more important hunters belonging to an Epulu net-hunting band. I myself have heard many of them told by these same hunters

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539 114 and by others. Although only a limited though representative selection of the legends is presented, a word should be said about the way the legends are told and the way these particular examples were collected and translated (Turnbull, 1959).

539 114 126 The original manuscripts were prepared under extremely difficult conditions by Mrs. Putnam while living in one of the Mbuti hunting camps. No typewriter was available. Apart from the physical difficulty of making a longhand rendition of the legends, as they were told, was the problem of translation. Mrs. Putnam did the only thing anyone except a proficient linguist could do, she translated the legend as it was told and wrote it down in English. This [191] procedure was further necessitated by the habit of these Mbuti, who speak three languages, of changing in the telling of a single legend from one to another as the mood seizes them.

539 114 Certainly, the ideal would have been to record the original texts, but these we do not have and could hardly expect to have under the circumstances. But we can be sure of the content and the general form of expression. I myself worked on the original manuscripts shortly af-

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114 ter their completion and had the opportunity of hearing many of the tales retold, sometimes spontaneously but more often with a little prompting given with the aid of the manuscripts. The only legends that were retold in recognizable form were those concerning creation myth, origin, and tradition, and a few of the more popular ones concerning the *satani*, or forest spirits.

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128 In transcribing from the manuscripts I have not altered the content, but I have attempted to reproduce the legends in a way that will convey something of the manner in which they are told, and I have omitted the often endless repetition. For the present purpose I have divided the legends into three groups: (1) creation myths, legends of origin and tradition; (2) legends dealing with social relations; and (3) legends dealing with relationships to the supernatural.

The bulk of the collection is divided equally between the second and third categories. Only three of the total of 200 legends concern the creation of the world, the stars, and the sky. Fewer than a dozen may be said to deal with the origin and traditional history of the Mbuti. The creation legends are very curtailed versions

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of villager legends. The legends of tradition are somewhat more original and are told in a slightly less summary way but still without any great show of interest or enthusiasm. 539 • 128

Most of the tales concern the Mbuti and their relationship with the three planes of existence that they acknowledge: the human, animal, and supernatural worlds. By various notable omissions and commissions they add to our understanding of their social and religious life. Whether the tales are villager in origin or not is for the present purpose not particularly significant. In practice they are never told the same way twice. They are often spontaneous creations arising from a certain set of circumstances, or they may be adaptations of dimly remembered tales, or of traditional villager tales, again made to fit certain sets of circumstances. One of the weaknesses of the present collection is the absence of such surrounding details. 539 [82] [772]

A full analysis of legends and the circumstances under which they are told, together with a similar analysis of other Mbuti arts, such as music and drama (all vitally important means of expression to the Pygmy), would give 539 121

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us a body of facts on which we could draw in a study of the Mbuti system of values, joining such an analysis to a more formal anthropological study. It is not intended to attempt such an analysis here; there is insufficient detail and further field work is needed. However, a study of the legends we have at our disposal, if it cannot provide the detailed systematization we would like, does at least give us a clearer picture of Mbuti values than could be had by merely observing their behavior.

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1. Creation Myths: Legends of Origin and Tradition

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As mentioned, for the Pygmy these subjects seem barely worth mention in legend. I give all three legends that deal with creation and with the sun and moon. None concerned the stars.

The Water and the Earth

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Many, many moons ago the Water was down below, and the Earth was way up in the sky. When it rained it rained dirt, and the dirt ruined all the water vegetables and spoiled all the water food, so that it had to be thrown away. The Water said to the Earth: "You are spoiling my water gardens by raining dirt. You come down here and I'll go up there."

The Earth agreed, and so the Water moved up and the Earth came down. When they had changed

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places, the Water said: "Now I'm going to rain on *you*, but *I'm* going to rain water." And the Water rained on the Earth. The earth vegetables flourished and the earth gardens grew. The Water said: "See, when I rain I don't spoil your food like you spoiled mine. It is good like this."

And from then onward the Water stayed up in the sky and the Earth stayed down below.

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The Sun and the Moon

The Sun and the Moon, who were close friends, had a big discussion. The Sun said to the Moon: "Come on up, high, high up; you and I will be higher than anything else—but now we should part. I will be high up over there in the east, and you will be high up over there in the west."

The Moon said: "Yes, I would like that, and it is good that we should stay apart because you are bright and shine like I do."

And so they divided the Heavens between them. When the Sun disappeared in the hours of the night, then the Moon passed by, all by itself. The Sun said: "This is very good. Your path is there, and mine is over here, but we must never cross at the same time; that would be very, very bad."

So they parted forever. That is why the Sun always shines in the daytime, and the Moon at night.

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The Pygmy and the Sun

There was a Pygmy who saw the sun in the middle of one afternoon. He thought it was a pigskin, so of course he tried to chase it and catch it. The Pygmy kept following, but the sun would not stay still. Still, the Pygmy followed until the sun disappeared from sight and night arrived. The Pygmy couldn't understand what had happened to the pigskin. He went to sleep.

When dawn came, the sun was way off in another direction. The Pygmy woke up and said to himself: "How did the pigskin get way over there?" He went toward the east and the sun kept coming toward him. They got nearer and nearer . . . then suddenly the sun passed the Pygmy. The Pygmy said: "Now, how did I pass the pigskin?" He turned and chased after the sun. He walked to the west. He walked and walked and walked, until the sun disappeared from sight and night arrived. The Pygmy couldn't understand what had happened to the pigskin. He went to sleep.

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539 The first beginnings of the Pygmies receive scant attention. The single legend in the collection referring to them runs as follows:

Way, way back, when the Great Forest was young, there were two Pygmy men and one Pygmy woman.

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They went off into the Forest together. The one man lived with his wife, but time went by and still they had no children. The other Pygmy saw this and decided that he would go to the main hunting camp. There he found another woman. He lived with her, and in due course a child was born. The Pygmy ran to his friend in the Forest in great joy, and told him the news. His friend immediately left the Forest and also lived with the woman in the hunting camp. They too had a child. And that is how Pygmies began, and how they became so plentiful. 539 •

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Another legend tells how two brothers fought over an ax.

One was killed, so the other said to his nephews and nieces: "See, I have killed your father. From now on, your family and mine are enemies. We will live apart; you will live over there and I will live here." And they parted forever.

That, a social anthropologist might say, was the beginning of fission and fusion.

But apart from this, and one legend telling how a great dreamer dreamed and was told how the Pygmies should make nets out of *nkusa* vine and hunt with nets, the remainder of legends dealing with the traditional past refer to relationship with the villagers, a subject of much more interest to the Mbuti. 539 177 787

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There is a particularly nice contrast in the way the villagers tell how the relationship began and the way the Pygmies tell the same story. Here is the villager version:

In the old days the Pygmies lived in holes in the trees, and nobody ever saw them. But one day a real man and his wife were walking through the forest and heard a strange sound. It was very loud and noisy. "What is this strange noise?" said the man to his wife, who replied, "I have no idea." "Well," said the man, "we will have to find that noise and see what it is. I'll go home and think what we should do." So he went home and thought, and he prepared a trap. He baited it with a banana, so that when the animal or whatever was making the noise grabbed the banana, an arrow would come down and pierce it.

The next morning the man and his wife set out with the trap and fixed it at the entrance to the hole in the tree from where the noise was coming. Then they went off a little way and waited to see what would happen. In a little while one of the Pygmies came to the mouth of the hole and saw the banana. He said to himself, "What is this?" Finally, his curiosity got the better of him and he made a grab for the banana. But as he touched it, the trap came down, and his hand was pierced by the arrow. He let

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out an awful scream. The man and his wife came rushing to the trap and seized him. They released him. The wife said, "What is this?" They stared at him and examined him carefully, and the wife admired his barkcloth. They took him back to their home and gave him lots of good things to eat.

One day the Pygmy said, "I have many relations in that hole." So the man fixed his trap and went back to the hole and put down his trap with a banana as bait. In a little while a hand came out of the hole and reached for the banana. The trap fell and the arrow pierced the flesh and the Pygmy let out an awful scream. The man and his wife rushed to the trap and took the Pygmy home. The first Pygmy saw them coming and shouted for joy, because they had caught his wife.

The next day the man and his wife went back with the trap, but all the other Pygmies refused to be tempted out of their hole, so they waited and waited in vain. The Pygmies in the hole said: "See, the other two grabbed the banana and were taken away. They must have been eaten up."

In the meantime the two Pygmies who lived in the village were having a very good time, and the real people gave them lots and lots of food. In due course they had a child, and then another child. When those children grew up they had children, and their children had children, and that is why there are so many Pygmies in the forest today.

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The Mbuti, as might be imagined, tell it differently.

The Mbuti were out hunting termites because, as you know, termites are good to eat. They built their houses. When night arrived the wives cooked food for their husbands. Then they all went to sleep. But in the middle of the night they heard a cry, "Oh! Oh! Oh!" "What is that?" said one Pygmy. "It is coming from over there!" cried another, pointing into the Forest. "Yes, it is a great noise coming from the old *liboyo* tree!" shouted a third. "We should go and see what it is!" They took their spears and crept up to the old *liboyo* tree. There they found a large hole in the ground, and they thought they could see faces peering up at them. But it was very dark, and they were afraid to go too close, so they returned to their camp.

"Tomorrow we shall go and see what it is all about," they said. "We shall go and we shall smoke it out of the hole, whatever it is."

The next morning they went back to the *liboyo* tree, carrying bundles of sticks and some fire wrapped up in *mongongo* leaves. They put the fire to the wood and started filling the hole with smoke. Then they heard voices calling out from the hole: "I'm dying, I'm dying! Oh, let me out, Brother, I'm dying!"

The Pygmies stopped the smoke and hurried to

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help whatever it was out of the hole, and out came people—Real People—much bigger than themselves, holding their heads and crying. They were villagers. "Where do you come from?" asked the Pygmies. "We don't know!" answered the Real People. "We fell into the hole by the old *liboyo* tree and then you started filling it with smoke. We should have died if you had not helped us out."

The Pygmies took the Real People with them, back to their termite camp, saying: "Come back with us to our termite camp. Now we shall all live together; there will be no fighting between us. You will be the Real People, truly, truly; you will be the Real People, truly."

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But the Mbuti have their own notions as to the origin of the "Real People." This legend characterizes their attitude to the villager—an attitude they never express in the presence of the villager, finding it more profitable to let the villagers continue to think that even the Mbuti themselves recognize the great superiority of the "Real People."

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How the Real People Began[1]

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In the old days there was a Savage. This Savage had a big house. She was a strange-looking woman. Not only was she tall and skinny and bony, but she had a mouth like a hippopotamus, and her stomach was enormous and her body covered with arrows. In the even older days she had had two husbands, but now both were dead. She said: "Now I'm all alone; everyone has left my village. But I'll get even. Anyone that comes by, I'll eat them."

And that is how the trouble started. She had a medicine that she put out to attract people, and when they came by she would say: "This is my house." If they became frightened and went away, her medicine brought them back. And always, she ate them. She ate them whole. She ate them one after another. Her stomach got larger and larger.

Then all the people she had eaten whole had babies and she soon had a flourishing village. She did not eat these people. They built lots of houses.

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The remaining three legends in this section explain how the Pygmies got fire, how the "Real People" tricked them out of the plantains they discovered (which is why the Pygmies have none), and, finally, how war began between Pygmies and villagers. Again the villagers are at fault. A Pygmy is tapping away in a tree, chopping out some honey, and some villagers

[1] As told by a Pygmy.

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539 passing by hear the noise and shoot at it with
186 an arrow. But even though wounded, the clever Pygmy remains very still, so the villagers think they must have been mistaken and go on. Then the Pygmy cuts them off and lies in wait and kills one of them as they come to him. And that began the war.

2. Legends Dealing with Social Relations

539 In this group we have a few legends telling
593 of the good mother (who protects her daughter
577 against nasty villagers) and the good father (who looks after his son when out hunting); the good sister (who protects her baby brother against a *satani*, a forest spirit); and the good brother (who does not quarrel with his brothers).

539 Social behavior is extolled in a similarly pos-
577 itive vein. Marriage and divorce, cooperative effort in the food quest, war and feud, hospitality to strangers—these are common topics, treated by telling how the reasonable Pygmy behaves in any of these situations. The remainder of the legends in this group deal with virtue and vice.

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539 Among the few legends commending the good
597 mother and father, the good brother and sister,
593 only one takes the opposite approach and tells
976 of the bad mother. I include it in this section because the emphasis seems to be on the thoughtlessness of the mother rather than the trickery of the *satani*.

A Pygmy, his wife, and his child, were all asleep. In the middle of the night the child woke up and began crying. He cried and he cried. He was crying from hunger, because his mother had not fed him. At last the mother got up and gave the child a plantain. Then she went back to lie down and they all fell asleep again. A little while later the child woke up again and started crying again because he was still hungry. He cried and he cried, but his father and his mother went on sleeping.

A *satani* arrived. "Why are you crying, my child?" he asked. "I am crying because I am hungry!" replied the child. "My mother hasn't given me enough to eat and she won't wake up."

So the *satani* fixed two pots of plantains, and lots of meat. He put them on the fire to cook. When it was all ready he put the food in front of the child and the child ate, and ate, and ate. "Oh! This is good!" said the child, and he ate still more. When he finished there was still a pot of plaintains and lots more meat, so the *satani* said, "Eat some more, my child, then

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you will not wake up hungry again." So the child ate some more. 539 577 593 796

At last the child had finished all but a few plantains and a little meat. "Oh! How full I am!" he said, holding his little stomach. "I have had enough, really." But the *satani* pointed to the plantains and the meat that still remained and said, "You must eat some more, or you will surely wake up hungry!" "But I have eaten all I can, really!" said the child. "Eat!" said the *satani*.

The child took a plantain and slowly began to eat it, then suddenly BAM! He burst. The *satani* vanished. The mother and father woke with a start and saw the dead body of their little child. "Oh, what can have happened?" cried the mother. And there was much grief.

But the father knew what had happened, the mother had let the child go to bed hungry. So the next night when they lay down to sleep, the father slept only with his eyes. In the middle of the night the *satani* arrived to see if there were any more children who had been allowed to go to bed hungry, so that he could feed them until they burst. The father leapt out of his bed and seized the *satani* and cried, "You devil! You killed our son because his mother allowed him to go to bed hungry!"

And the father killed the *satani* completely.

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Most of the legends extolling social behavior are told in a matter-of-fact way and are not infrequently related to incidents in the lives of members of the community. Again, only one legend in the collection deals directly with anti-social behavior. It concerns a man who constantly maltreated his hunting dog. In net-hunting groups, such as the one in which these legends were collected, anything that concerns hunting concerns the entire society. This particular individual fed his dog only on the genitals of other animals. The dog saw that other dogs were being fed on more dainty morsels, such as liver; so one night when his master was sleeping he got his knife and killed the Pygmy. The Pygmy's wife woke up so the dog killed her also. The dog then disappeared.

Even a brief glance at the legends reveals that the one quality to which these Mbuti attach the greatest importance is cleverness, a term that in certain circumstances also means trickery. Conversely, while selfishness, greed, laziness, and gossiping women are mildly condemned in a number of legends, the sin of sins is stupidity. These two qualities are so overriding that cleverness can make crime pay, whereas stupidity can bring death and disaster to the

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539 best-intentioned of Pygmies. It is worth noting
577 here that we find an almost exact parallel in the way these legends deal with the animal world,
539 in which cleverness is the supreme virtue. Leg-
577 ends extolling cleverness among Pygmies must
825 not, then, necessarily be taken as supplying a model for behavior in Pygmy society, but rather as showing how satisfactory relationships can best be established with the animal world. This has much wider implications, as we shall see below.

One of the tales of cleverness tells how a young Pygmy becomes a great hunter, not by killing game by himself, simply, but by killing it with trickery. In such legends the great ideal of the Mbuti seems to be to match the animal world in its own terms. But in other Mbuti legends they rely on aid from the animals to help them in their trickery.

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825 Two men went to their camp. While they were walking through the forest they came across a tree called *pusia*, which bears delicious nuts. One of the men gathered nuts from this tree, but the second man gathered from another tree, bearing very bitter nuts. When they reached their camp they roasted their nuts over the fire. The man with the bitter nuts offered them to his friend, who tasted them and said, "Oh! These are terrible, I can't eat them." The two of them shared the sweet nuts.

Later on, the man with the bitter nuts went back to the tree and stole the rest of the sweet nuts and roasted them over the fire. When they were ready he offered them to his friend. His friend tasted them and said, "These are sweet; they must be my nuts. You have stolen my nuts." "I wouldn't steal your nuts!" "Well, tomorrow I'll go and see."

At first light, the man who had found the sweet nuts went to his tree and saw that all the nuts were gone. He returned to the camp and told his friend what he had found. "You see, you did steal all my nuts. You can stay here no longer."

So the man who stole the nuts left the camp and went through the forest until he came to a *konga* bird. When he saw the *konga* bird, he explained what had happened and said, "Please don't kill me." The *konga* bird said, "All right, you can stay here and look after us." In the meantime, the other Pygmy, his nuts all eaten, decided to follow his friend. When he finally arrived his friend said to the *konga* bird, "There is my brother whose sweet nuts I stole. You can kill him if you like." So together, they killed the Pygmy who had allowed himself to be tricked.

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000 As might be expected, cleverness is frequently

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As might be expected, cleverness is frequently 539
associated with smallness. In several legends 828
the whole purport is the superiority (in this 825
respect) of small animals over large. It is not [186]
difficult to identify the smaller, clever animal
as the Pygmy, nor the larger, more clumsy, and
stupid animal as the villager. Already we are on
the fringe of a borderline world. The animal and
the human worlds are related with regard to
this quality of cleverness, or trickery, a quality
that seems to be essentially animal rather than
Pygmy. By cultivating this quality, by imita-
tion, the Pygmy is able to establish a relatively
satisfactory relationship between the two
worlds. But "cleverness" also brings the Pygmy
into relationship with the spiritual world. It is
through cleverness, for instance, that he is able
to thwart the trickery of the forest *satani*.

Old age, with its greater store of experience, 539
connotes cleverness to the Pygmy. Old people 828
are regarded as possessing a special abundance 577
of this quality, which automatically associates 888
them more closely with the animal and spiritual

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worlds. A number of legends deal with the cleverness of old people. There are old aunts and old grandmothers who eat children left in their care, and old men and women are frequently deserted by the Pygmies when they move camp (in their legends). Yet these old people can use their powers for good, if so inclined, as in the legend of the old woman with yaws who tried to save three young Pygmies from being killed and eaten by a tricky old man. Also, of course, it is the old people who have the most success in dealing with the *satani*. But (discussion of this aspect of old age is given in the next section) the legends do reveal quite clearly that old age, when accompanied by disability, is regarded with loathing by the Pygmies as, indeed, is disability by itself. In the legends, old people and cripples are given every chance to prove that they are still useful members of society. The old cripple who is deserted but who can kill a *satani* and rejoin his hunting group is welcomed back. But another old cripple who cannot move at all when he is deserted, although he kills two *satani* who attack him, is left to die. Old women seem particularly suspect, and I cite here an example of sanctioned matricide. I might add that I have never known this to occur and that, in my experience, the Mbuti take great care of their old people. At the same time I must admit to having seen no complete cripples and to having heard disquieting stories

539 828 577 888 539 828 577 888 732 [776] [682] 539 577 888 732 [P 264-D]

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about cripples that just happened to disappear or who suddenly just "died completely."

There was once a Pygmy named Butuwa. He was in the forest, and was sleeping with his wife, children, and old mother. His mother had no legs. In the middle of the night Butuwa said to his wife: "Mother is sleeping soundly; get the children together and let's go away." So they quietly picked up their belongings, and, together with their children, they crept away. They walked and walked and walked.

Early in the morning the old woman woke up. She said: "Where is everybody? Oh! They are a bad family, they have gone off and left their legless old mother to die. I will follow them." So saying, she stood on her head and walked and walked and walked until she caught up with them, walking on her head. She was very angry with them for having deserted her, and told them how bad they were to have left her alone in the forest. That night they all went to sleep together.

In the middle of the night the Pygmy said to his wife: "Now mother is really asleep; get the children together and let's go away." So they collected the children, picked up their belongings, and stole away. They walked and walked and walked.

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539 Early in the morning the old woman woke up, and
577 she was very, very angry to find that her family had
888 deserted her again. So she stood on her head and she
732 walked and walked and walked, until she caught up with them, walking on her head. She told her son how bad he was. She was very cross indeed. Her son went off into the forest and gathered some honey. And then he got a very bad worm and put it in the honey. He returned to the camp, and said: "Don't be angry with me, mother. Look, I have brought you some fine honey." And the legless old mother ate up the honey, worm and all. And the worm ate up the legless old mother's stomach, and the legless old mother died.

Butuwa left and went to another camp where they had relations. When they got to the camp, their relations asked: "What news; where is your mother?" "Oh! She died," said Butuwa. "That's too bad," said the others.

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3. Legends Dealing with Relationships to the Supernatural

Above, we see animals appearing in connection with the quality of cleverness and how an excess of this quality can break through the flimsy barrier between the natural and the supernatural world. Here we consider the large number of legends in the collection in which animals appear with almost exclusive reference to their supernatural quality. Some legends

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seem to deal with relationships between animals as animals. But, even with these, we can suspect that there is some hidden meaning that is not clear to us, until we know more about these Mbuti or, indeed, that may not even be clear to the Mbuti themselves. Here is such a tale: 539 825

There was once a chimpanzee and an elephant. The chimpanzee took bugs out of the elephant's hair. When he had finished he said to the elephant, "Now, you take the bugs out of my hair." So the elephant took out bug after bug after bug. He pulled harder and harder, and finally he pulled so hard that he pulled the chimpanzee's head right off. When the elephant saw what had happened he ran away. He went to his cousins in their hole. He said: "I have done something awful; I have killed a chimpanzee." His cousins said: "Really? Tomorrow we shall go and see."

The next morning they all left the hole. They saw the dead chimpanzee and said, "What shall we do with the body?" They decided the best thing was to let it rot there. So they let it rot, and they went back to their hole.

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Most of the tales, however, deal with relationships between the animal and the human worlds. Some of these relate how Pygmies and animals become friends—almost. This corresponds to a mutual sympathy that the Pygmies seem to believe exists between them and the animals that share the forest with them, but, however much they may both try to meet, it can never quite be done.

An elephant and a Pygmy were friends. The Pygmy was called Mbali. He went to visit his friend, the elephant. When he arrived at the elephant's village, the elephant was delighted and said to his wife, "My friend, Mbali, has come; make us a nice dish of mashed plantains." So his wife pounded the plantains, added salt, and put the dish over the fire. When it was ready the elephant took some red-hot embers and held them to his feet, and the elephant fat ran into the food. When there was enough he turned to his friend, Mbali, and said, "Eat well." The two of them sat down and ate up all the food. The Pygmy said, "This is delicious." He went back to his camp.

The next day the elephant said to his wife, "Now I will go and visit my friend, Mbali." So he cleaned himself up and set off. When he arrived at Mbali's camp, Mbali saw him and called, "Welcome, friend! Come and sit down." He told his wife that his friend had come, and that she should prepare some mashed plantains for him. When it was cooked the Pygmy took some red-hot embers and started putting them

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539
825 to his foot. The elephant said, "Don't do that, it will kill you. My feet are big and heavy, let me do it." "Don't be silly," replied the Pygmy, and put the embers to his feet. He screamed with pain and almost died. The elephant took hold of him and brought him back to life, then said, "See, I told you it would kill you." The elephant then took the hot embers and put them to his feet so that the oil ran out into the plantains, and they all sat down and ate.

When the meal was finished the elephant returned to his home. His wife greeted him and asked if he had had a good time. He said: "It was terrible. My friend, Mbali, took red-hot embers and put them to his feet and almost killed himself. I shall never go back there again, never."

Basi

Relationships with chimpanzees are less happy. The Pygmy and the chimpanzee seem to be just about equally matched in cleverness, and they are continually killing each other. Typical is the tale of the Pygmy who sat down to watch a group of chimpanzees playing.

One of the chimpanzees noticed the Pygmy and came over to him. He said, "What are you doing here?" He called to his brother chimpanzees, "Come and see this Pygmy." They came over and said,

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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539 825 "We'll fight him." One of the chimpanzees grabbed at the Pygmy, but meanwhile the Pygmy had taken up his spear. The Pygmy killed the chimpanzee. The others said, "What did the Pygmy kill our brother with?" And one answered, "It seemed to be with the root of a tree." So another of the chimpanzees gathered up the roots of the trees and threw them at the Pygmy. The Pygmy killed him with his spear. The remaining chimpanzees sat down and tried to puzzle this out. One of them searched all round and found the spear. He took it and killed the Pygmy. The chimpanzees then gathered some leaves and put them over the Pygmy. They all left.

The Pygmy's brother went to look for him. He found him dead, covered with leaves. He said, "What could have happened? Who killed my brother?"

Basi

539 825 828 Leopards and turtles are tricky animals that teach the Pygmy much of his cleverness in legend. They appear frequently, and it is always their cleverness and trickery that are stressed. But here we consider another aspect of these animal tales. Not only is it always their cleverness and trickery that are stressed, thus automatically associating them with the supernatural, if only indirectly, but they are often identified with villagers. In talking of villagers, in legend, more often than not the Pygmy gives them animal form. The villager is very defi-

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1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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nitely not included on the human side of the opposition between the animal and human worlds (the villager is often associated with an excess of cleverness). A frequently heard motif is for a Pygmy to wound an animal with a spear or an arrow. The animal escapes, carrying away the weapon. Later, the Pygmy discovers that weapon, covered with blood, hidden in the house of some Bira villager. The Pygmy then knows that he had, in fact, wounded a villager who had changed into an animal. 539 • 825 186 [828]

The collection includes one very similar legend in which exactly the same motif is used, accounting for enmity between two Pygmy hunting groups. A Pygmy wounds an elephant with a spear, and the elephant escapes, carrying away the spear. The Pygmy's father sends his son off to look for the lost spear. On his way through a village, he meets a Bira who says he has seen the spear in the hut of the Pygmy's best friend, another Pygmy. The Bira helps to conceal the unfortunate hunter in his friend's hut; at night, when his friend is sleeping, he

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searches and finds his spear. But, as he is escaping, he is seen by other Pygmies who say, "Oh! So it was you who tried to kill our brother; we will kill you." 539 825 186

In the ensuing fight the elephant hunter kills all the other Pygmies and returns to his father who is well satisfied.

The Bira villagers frequently turn into elephants and take advantage of their great size to make war on the Pygmies, destroying the forest as they do so. They are bad enough at the best of times, in Pygmy estimation, but apparently they become elephants when they are particularly bad.

A Bira and his wife had a terrible fight. The wife decided to leave and go to her mother's village, but her husband followed her. And as he followed, he turned into an elephant. He crashed through the forest and destroyed everything in sight. His wife heard the great noise and climbed a tree. The elephant tracked her down and started to knock the tree down. He charged at it and tore at it, but try as he might he could not pull it down. His wife held on tightly. Then she called to the Pygmies. The Pygmies heard her and came to her rescue. When she saw them she told them to kill the elephant. They attacked it with spears. They speared it again and again, but it would not die. It charged at the Pygmies and drove them back, right back to the Bira village. There the elephant spoke and said, "You have tried to kill me, your friend, a Bira." The Pygmies replied:

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1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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[P.267-A]

539 825 186 "But you have turned into an elephant and tried to kill your wife. Because of that you must cross over to the other side of the river and die." The elephant said, "You want to kill me?" "Yes," said the Pygmies. "You have become a very bad elephant." So the elephant went across to the other side of the river. The Pygmies went back and took his wife to her mother.

Basi

539 825 We next examine some of the legends that very definitely attach supernatural attributes to certain animals and birds. There is a legend that warns against annoying porcupines. A Pygmy that tries to smoke some porcupines out of their hole is attacked, driven into another hole, and turned into an animal. Similarly a pangolin, if annoyed, has the power to drag its tormentor down into the world of the ancestors, through a great hole in the ground.

But some of the strangest tales concern birds. Above is an account of the *konga* bird that helped the Pygmy who stole the sweet nuts to kill his brother. Another, unidentified bird is popular in legend—the Bird with the Beautiful Song. It sings the most Beautiful Song that the Great Forest has ever heard.

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One day, a Pygmy child heard this Beautiful Song and searched for the Bird that could sing so wonderfully. He found it and praised its Song. The Bird flew down and perched on the boy's head, and the boy brought it back to the Pygmy camp. His father saw the Bird and praised it. When it sang he told the boy to give it some food. The Bird then flew off. The next day the boy heard the Song and searched until he found the Bird again. Once again he brought it back to the camp. This happens three times, and the last time the father takes the Bird from the boy and says, "Now you go off and leave me. Leave this camp and go away to another; go! go!" The young Pygmy left his father and went to another camp. When he was alone, the father took the Bird, the Bird that sang the most Beautiful Song that the Great Forest had ever heard, and he killed the Bird. And he killed the Song.

And no sooner had he killed the Bird than he himself dropped down dead, completely dead, dead forever.

Basi

Another curious bird is *fifi*. Like the legend of the Bird with the Beautiful Song, the legend

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1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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of the *fifi* is told with great awe by the Mbuti; it is reproduced here in full. 539 825

There was once a poor Pygmy girl. She was crippled, and her skin was full of disease. She was only about eight years old. The Pygmies were breaking camp. Nobody was willing to carry the little cripple for fear of catching the disease. So when all the Pygmies had left the camp, the little girl was all alone, by herself. She cried and she cried and she cried. And when night fell she crawled into her empty hut and she cried herself to sleep.

At daybreak she heard a sound like: "Pip! Pip! Pip!" It was the bird called the *fifi* bird. It had fastened a long rattan vine between two trees, and it was sitting on the vine swinging back and forth, back and forth. The little girl went to look more closely, and the bird flew away.

In the distance there was a Bira villager with his hunting trap. Seeing the diseased cripple he came up and said: "My poor child, you have been left here all by yourself . . . I must kill you." And he took his knife and lifted it to kill the girl. But the knife caught his nose and cut it. It killed him and he fell down dead. The girl caught hold of the rattan vine, and she swung herself back and forth, back and forth. 539 825 186

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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As she was swinging on the vine, another Bira villager, seeing the movement, came slowly into the clearing. "What is this?" he said to himself. "Why, it is a crippled little Pygmy girl. Get off your vine swing, my child, and come over here to me."

539 • 825 186

The girl got down from her swing and made her way over to where the Bira was standing. Then she sat down on the ground and held her withered little legs. "Come nearer, my child," said the Bira, reaching forward. "No! No! I can't come any nearer," cried the girl. "My legs hurt so much, and I am all diseased." "Very well, I shall kill you," replied the Bira. "Oh, please don't do that, I'm only a poor deserted child." "But why did your father leave you all alone?" asked the Bira. "No, I must certainly kill you."

And he took a piece of wood and tried to strike the little crippled Pygmy girl. But the wood flew back in his face and hit him on the nose, and the blood streamed down. With the blood still streaming down he ran back to his village and told everyone: "There is a poor deserted Pygmy girl in the Pygmy camp. She is crippled and diseased, and she has the evil eye. She will surely kill us all." And with some friends and relations he hurried to the deserted camp.

There was the little girl, sitting on the swing, swinging herself back and forth, back and forth. The Bira called to her: "Come here, my poor child. You have killed one of our relatives, and you have wounded me. You are crippled and diseased, and you have been deserted. I am going to kill you."

The little girl got down from her swing and slowly

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1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[p. 268-A]

539 825 186 came over to where the Bira was standing. "Come nearer, little one!" said the Bira. "Oh, please don't kill me," said the Pygmy girl, "I am only a deserted cripple, and I haven't run away." But she came closer still. The Bira raised his knife. "Now!" he said," "Now, I am going to kill you!" But the knife caught in his stomach, and he fell down, he fell down dead.

The girl went back to her swing, dragging her withered little legs along the ground. And she climbed on the swing and swung herself back and forth, back and forth. The remaining Bira all hurried back to their village.

"Come! Come! Come, all of you!" they cried. "There is a crippled little Pygmy girl in the deserted camp, and she will surely kill us all unless we kill her. Get your spears, and come!" And all the Bira villagers seized their spears and came running to the deserted camp. They all came to take their revenge and kill the deserted little Pygmy girl.

But the girl had gone.

The only sign of life was the *fifi* bird, and the *fifi* bird was sitting on the rattan vine, swinging itself back and forth, back and forth, back and forth.

Basi

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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There is another link between the animal and the supernatural worlds in the alleged existence of "water animals." These water animals are not particularly dangerous spirits; they appear rather as vehicles to transport the Pygmy from the natural world to the supernatural. There is a legend told by the Epulu Pygmies of a man who was known, they say, to their fathers.

> There was once a man called Ngoyi. He was tired of all his relatives and said: "I can't live with you any longer. I'm going to live on my own." And off he went to the river named Tato, where he disappeared into the water. He called out, "I'm going to stay here in the water, and you won't be able to see me any more."
>
> His family had all followed him to the river and asked: "Are you really going to stay there in the water?" He replied, "Yes." He called his children and took them into the water with him. They all disappeared.
>
> Now Ngoyi was a clever worker of wood, and, if you go to the river today and throw in a piece of wood, he will make it into whatever you want. His children are there also, and during the day time they come out to play. And even though they disappear when you come near, you can always hear them talking.
>
> *Basi*

Another legend tells how two brothers were crossing a stream, and one fell in. The other

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1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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thought his brother had been drowned, and returned to camp with the news, but actually he had become a water animal. Some weeks later the land brother saw his water brother and tried to tempt him home, so glad was he to see him still alive. But the water brother caught hold of him and pulled him into the water, so the land brother also became a water animal.

And the two Water Brothers stayed in the stream; they stayed in the stream and never came out again.

A third legend connects the rainbow with these water animals.

Some girls were off cutting wood. They crossed a stream by a fallen tree. But really the tree was the "bad water animal, called *klima*, the Rainbow." When returning they all crossed, except the slowest of the girls, and a man who waited for her. As these two were halfway across, the dead tree, which was really the rainbow which was really a water animal, suddenly dived down into the water, carrying them with it. Later on, the couple was seen sitting on a rock in the middle of the stream, but never again after that.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Quite distinct from the water animals are the forest spirits which these Pygmies call *satani*. They are, unlike the water animals, capable of being dealt with. Their outstanding characteristic is an excess of cleverness amounting to the grossest trickery. They molest the Pygmies on every possible occasion, stealing their food, devouring them in anthropophagous orgies. The Pygmies resort to cleverness of the same order. It is perfectly possible, though difficult, for a Pygmy to outwit a *satani*, even to kill one. But one of the legends warns against imitating a *satani's* ways too closely.

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One day a Pygmy and his child went for a walk. They collected some *eseli* nuts. On the way they met a *satani*. The *satani* put a nut on the child's head and split the nut with a machete. "Oh!" said the Pygmy, "that's like the *nkumbi* circumcision school. Tomorrow, I'll collect some more nuts and try that."

The next day he went with his child to the same place and collected some more *eseli* nuts. He put one of the nuts on his child's head and hit it with his machete. He killed his child dead. The *satani*, who had been watching, said, "See! You have killed your child."

The Pygmy left his child's body there and went down to the river. The *satani* went with him. The *satani* threw his spear into the water. The Pygmy said, "I'd like to do that!" But, when he tried, the

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1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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spear went all over the place, everywhere except into the water. He said: "When you do it, *satani*, it goes straight, yet when I do it it goes all over the place." They left each other.

Basi

Pygmies become *satani* far less frequently than they become water animals, but it can happen. The woman who gossiped became a *satani*. The following tale tells how a certain Pygmy was driven to the same fate by his relatives.

There was once a young Pygmy whose name was Mambalia. His relations kept whipping and whipping him until at last he could bear it no more and ran away into the forest. His family followed him, but he built a huge fire and said: "I am not going back—never!" And he ran even farther away. His relations returned to their camp.

After that, whenever Mambalia heard voices he ran farther away still, until finally, he said: "Now this is my part of the forest, and nobody must come here. I'm going to stay here all by myself."

He lived in a hole in a tree where no one could find him. He became very, very powerful. He became a *satani*. And now he is an old, old man.

Basi

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

Mbuti creations. But however much they enlarge upon the power and horror of the evil spirits, they always show that the Mbuti are not without power themselves, and the spirits are every now and again defeated and killed by Mbuti trickery. This confirms the village belief that the Mbuti are in fact in league with the spirits; just the fact that they coexist in the same forest is cited by many villagers as evidence of their affinity.

I cite two legends here (the KiBira versions of the same legends told by the same Mbuti are given in Appendix I[1], both of which show Mbuti ambivalence at its height. The first describes an Mbuti band in a village context (in a plantation) and pointedly refers to a myth that the Mbuti had bananas before the villagers. This is not generally believed to be true, but it is a way of expressing the undoubted prior occupation and ownership of the forest by the Mbuti. In this legend the Mbuti are threatened by a quasi-real enemy, the elephant. Elephants are indeed destructive to plantations and sometimes to Mbuti camps, but here, as seen at the end, the elephant is also a symbol for the villager (who is also destructive in his act of cutting down the forest). To rid themselves of the elephantine menace the Mbuti invent a story about evil spirits, making use of the knowledge that the elephant is basically stupid. When describing the elephant's fear of the spirits, the narrator comments, "Their fear was empty" (*"bachei ba bo"*), "for elephants are like villagers" (*"bambongu bua sopilabatu"*). The legend significantly ends with the promise that the narrator and his family will live happily forever after, but for "happily" the word *kobia* (more often, *ekimi*) is used. It means "quietly."

LEGEND OF THE MBUTI PLANTATION

In olden times we Mbuti had bananas before the people of the village. The people of the village stole bananas from us. We shared together, we Mbuti taking the leaves and the villagers taking the roots. They tricked us this way.

Our plantations of old were good, but the elephants used to bother us a lot. They killed many plantations. The Mbuti said, "What shall we do? The elephants are bothering us so much and are killing our plantations."

An old man, very old indeed, said, "When the elephants come again, we shall talk with them." The youths said, "What will you say?" The old man replied, "You shall see, children."

[1] [see page 301 -- Analyst]

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

539 186 825 245 The elephants came. They began to kill all the bananas. They began to completely kill the plantation. The youths ran to the old man and said, "Oh, Father, the elephants have come again and are killing our plantation." [The old man said], "Good, I shall go and chat with them. All of you stay here, completely quiet."

The old man went to the plantation. He cried and cried. He threw himself on the ground. The elephants looked at him and said, "What thing is this? The youths have not come to chase us away, only an old Mbuti and he just cries. It is good, we shall eat quietly."

They ate many bananas, and the youths remained completely quiet in the camp. The old man cried greatly, "Oh, my children, all are dead. Oh, my children, where are they?"

The elephants heard, and said to the old man, "Why are you crying like that? And where are the youths? We shall eat up all the plantation." The old man replied, "Eat, eat it all. My children are all dead." And he continued crying.

539 186 825 245 776 The elephants said, "But you have many children. How did they die?" The old man said, "It was an evil spirit, very evil indeed. He walked with two spears.[2] He was very fat, like you. Every day I sent someone to cut bananas and the evil spirit ate him. Now he has eaten all my children. He said it was his plantation and that he would kill everyone who came here. Oh, my children have all died emptily. Why did the evil spirit not bother some other plantation, why did he curse mine?" He cried greatly and he left.

The elephants said, "Ha! If a spirit that bad has cursed this plantation, we should go somewhere else. Let us go quickly, before he kills us!"

Because elephants are like people of the village, and they are afraid of evil spirits. But they are afraid emptily. They went far. The old man called all his children and said, "Now the elephants will not come back. They think this is a place full of bad spirits. Thus we shall remain quiet. It is our plantation. Nobody else will bother us."

539 186 829 Although the scene is the plantation, thus asserting their claim to the plantations of the villagers, the Mbuti plainly are really referring

765 [2] Evidently a feature that to the Mbuti conveys a real fear of or respect for the supernatural, for in the morning rampages of the *molimo*, in its role as judge and when seeking Mbuti who are committing the crime of sleeping during the singing, the hunter acting the part carries a spear under each arm. See also in the second legend cited, where a spirit wanders through the night with two firebrands, which is the way in which the entrance of the *molimo* trumpet into the camp is often marked.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

to their forest sanctuary, and describing their tactics for keeping it free of bothersome, elephant-like villagers. Hunting is not mentioned; the two spears (and in the next legend the two firebrands) are uniquely related to the *molimo*, which, as is seen in the next chapter, offers major roles to the elders and the youths; precise age levels are specified in this legend. Thus the defense of the forest is considered as part of the role of the *molimo*. There is significantly no talk of a resort to magic or witchcraft or sorcery, and the mention of the evil spirits is accompanied by no belief in them.

In the second legend, however, the first part is a very straight description of exactly how an Mbuti might cheat a villager simply by concealing a portion of his honey, whereas the second part describes how the Mbuti is himself cheated. The second part alone could be taken as another way in which Mbuti explain to villagers why they have no meat or honey for them (see a third legend at the end of this chapter for such an example), but in this juxtaposition seems to indicate a certain belief that the Mbuti themselves might be cheated in this way.

LEGEND OF DOUBLE TRICKERY

I went to the forest to collect honey. I went, I went, I went. I went very far, beyond the big river [an indication of trespass, perhaps, making it a situation displeasing to the forest; hence the ultimate defeat of the Mbuti?]. I heard the sound of bees. Way up high I saw the place of the honey. I said, "Ha! Nobody has enclosed this tree with a vine; it is my tree, it is my honey."

I sharpened my ax, very sharp indeed. I cut a vine, I fanned up my fire and put the fire [smoking embers] in my basket. I began to climb. I climbed, I climbed, I climbed. The honey was very high up, it was real honey, not *apuma* [a special fermented honey]. I reached it. I fastened the vine and I sat. I put the fire [in a leaf cone] into the hole and I blew. Much smoke came and the bees ran away. I chopped, I chopped, I chopped. While I was cutting I heard someone walking below. "Ah! Who is walking below me? It is my master [*kpara*]. He heard me cutting [the adverse aspect of noise] and followed me."

I began to sing. I sang loudly. He called to me, but I pretended that I did not hear him. I sang and I chopped. I sang, "Ah! I am chopping out honey to give to my *kpara!*" And slowly I chopped out the honey. I got a lot of it. But I only put part of it in my basket. The

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

539 222 571 439 rest I put in a place where the tree had two arms [i.e., in a fork]. I sang, "Ah! There is only a little honey, but I shall give it all to my *kpara*." I came down.

"Ah! My Mbuti, what are you doing here?" My *kpara* looks at the basket.

"Ah! My master. I came to search for my honey, but there is only a little of it. It is a bad year. It is heavy work. You must go back with my honey; if I get any more I shall come with it."

The *kpara* took my honey with him and returned to the village to say that he had eaten all my honey. His stupidity! [*Ndamdama nda'e!* or *Mbafu yaké!*] When he had gone I quickly climbed up above and I collected all the honey from the place I had put it, and I came down to return to the camp and share it with all my relatives. I walked, I walked, I walked. I arrived at the big river. Darkness began to come. I said, "Ha! Is night catching me in the middle of the forest like this? What shall I do?" I climbed up a big tree and lay there.

539 222 776 Halfway through the night I heard a sound and woke up. A little way off I saw two firebrands. "Ah! Who is walking in the middle of the night like that, with two firebrands? It is an evil spirit." I remained completely quiet. I heard a woman's voice. "Ah! My child, where is my child?" It was the voice of my grandmother, a very, very old woman. I was surprised. "Ha! Grandmother is looking for me in the middle of the night like this? Is it really my grandmother?"

"Ah! Where is my child? Either a leopard has caught him or he has lost the trail."

I remained quiet, but the two firebrands came right up underneath the tree. It was truly an evil spirit, but he had changed into my grandmother. I sneezed. "Ah! My child is up in the tree?"

"Yes, Grandmother. I am here. I was searching for honey, but darkness caught me on the trail."

"Oh, child, you have done badly, for when you did not return I thought you were dead and I left camp to search for you, and I have found you well. You have done very badly toward me. Give me my honey."

"Ah! Grandmother, it is very heavy. I shall carry it for you, I, myself. We shall return together."

"Nonsense! You are afraid of the night. You stay here. I shall return with my honey. Give it." I was afraid, because I knew it was an evil spirit. I threw some honey down. "Give me more, give me more." I threw down more. "Give me more."

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

"There is no more, Grandmother." "Yes there is, give it, my bad child." I was very afraid. I threw it all down and said, "That is all, Grandmother, take it and go. There is no more. Take it and return to your place. I shall stay here."

"Thank you, my child, I shall return. Stay well."

"Go well, Grandmother."

I sat with eyes [i.e., watchfully] and waited for daylight. When daylight came I climbed down. I looked for the footprints of my grandmother. There were no footprints. "Ah!" I said. "It was truly an evil spirit. I did well to throw down all my honey, or it would have killed me completely."

That is why I returned empty-handed.

If in telling the stories the Mbuti do so to such good effect that they half convince themselves, they more than convince the villagers. The advantages of the situation to the Mbuti are as obvious as they are considerable. But at the same time it has to be pointed out that the forest itself *is* hostile to the villagers, and they have very real reason to dislike and fear it. It not only makes their life as cultivators hard and uncertain but it makes communication through the forest highly dangerous, to the extent that, until the road along which the villages are now eagerly clustered was built across the middle of the forest, the villages were very self-contained units with little intercommunication. Even now villagers will walk twice as far or more by road to reach another village, rather than take a simple shortcut across the forest. Unversed as they are in forest lore, its dangers are real to the villagers and there are frequent instances of villagers disappearing without trace even while on a relatively short trip. They are promptly added to the legion of forest spirits by their relatives, who have an even greater fear of the forest from then on.

The Mbuti, however, know the forest and its ways, and the dangers it has to offer are exceptionally few and far between. There is certainly nothing in the course of natural events in the forest to suggest to hunters and gatherers any trace of hostility. There is a great abundance of material goods, and of health and security, all of which suggest benevolence. This is taken up in the final section on the forest world, dealing with the religious life of the Mbuti.

One of the best examples of the kind of use to which the Mbuti put village beliefs that do not tally with their own is seen in the following legend (quoted in *The Forest People*, Chapter 7). It makes

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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use of the village fear and respect for forest spirits, but it also makes use of the village love for asserting their superiority and their paternalism. It even makes use of the village concept of kinship obligations, and the respect and obedience owed to a grandmother.

The occasion on which the legend was told was the return of Cephu to the camp, after a short absence in the village, laden down with village foods. It was known that he had gone empty-handed, and it was equally known that he was not on good enough terms with any of the villagers to get such a handout for nothing, that he was too lazy to have worked for reward and too wary of pursuit to steal. However, theft seemed the only answer, so he was asked from whom he had stolen the food. Always a great dramatist, Cephu told the following story in answer, and it quickly became a favorite.

"I am only a poor Mbuti; the forest is my father and my mother. But my village master asked me for meat, so I hunted and I hunted and I hunted. I caught *sondu* and *lendu* and *mboloko* and *sindula*, and I cut them all up and dried them carefully. When they were nice and dry I wrapped the meat in fresh *mongongo* leaves and put it all in my basket and set off for the village."

This much everyone knew to be completely false, but the implied ridicule of the villagers who would believe it was not lost.

"But on the way I saw a bad spirit coming toward me. I tried to escape but he caught up with me and demanded the meat. I said, 'No, this is for my master. I cannot give it to you. You may take all my own food, but not this meat—that is for my beloved master.' But the spirit was not to be put off, and I had to fight with him. Finally I managed to escape because I am strong, and a great hunter, and I ran on toward the village as fast as I could. Spirits are very bad things to fight. They would kill any villager; only we Mbuti can deal with them. But then I saw the spirit again, and this time he was more clever than I, and he changed into my grandmother.

"'A'i, Cephu, where are you going with all that meat?' she asked me.

"Now, my grandmother died many years ago and I had to be polite to her. So I told her I was taking it to my beloved master. But she got angry and demanded it, asking if I would refuse it to her, an Mbuti, my own grandmother, and bring it to a villager. I pleaded with her and begged her, telling her how good my master always was to me and how hungry he was for meat. But she snatched the basket from me,

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and because she was my grandmother I could not strike her or stop her, and she ran off down the trail.

"As she was running she changed into a spirit again so that she could run faster, and as soon as my grandmother was a spirit once more I could fight, so I fought and fought, and the spirit nearly killed me, and he went off in the manner of spirits and left me with nothing, not even my basket.

"When I came to the village I was crying because I had nothing to offer my master, and when my master asked me what was wrong I told him this story. He was terribly sorry because he knew what dreadful lives we Mbuti lead, surrounded by all these bad spirits. He said if it was not for the spirits he would come into the forest and hunt himself, but everyone knows how dangerous the spirits are to villagers. Then I asked him if I could have some rice, as I had lost all my own food as well as his. He said, 'Of course, my poor Mbuti. You have tried to help your master, and you can't help it if you are just an Mbuti and have to live among all those dreadful spirits.'

"So he gave me the rice and plantains and I came away happy. How kind the villagers are to their 'poor Mbuti'!"

Such stories are legion, being told by the Mbuti almost every time they are questioned by the villagers as to why they have brought no meat. They are equally, if not even more frequently, told, however, in the forest hunting camps, and are part of the constant effort of the Mbuti to affirm at all times the distinction between the two worlds, the forest and the village. Magic, witchcraft, sorcery and the belief in forest spirits are all turned to the same effect, among others, and combine to keep the worlds apart not only in theory but also in practice.

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(*ndura nde bokbu*), and if pressed begin to enumerate the totality of their experience. Primarily, however, they refer to the forest as mother or father, according to context. On the hunt the men address it as father, the women as mother. A man receiving a sudden unexpected favor, as he sees it (coming across a cache of highly prized mushrooms), is apt to address the forest as mother. A woman who is having a hard time finding the leaves or saplings she wants will, getting into a tangle of undergrowth, almost certainly start addressing the forest as father and accuse it of being far too severe and strict. The terms are so widely and frequently used that I have no means of saying which is the more prevalent. If anything, I would hazard a guess that "mother" is used more often than "father." The Mbuti themselves say that which term they use and when is a matter for their *roho*.

The extent to which the Mbuti personify the forest is seen when in explanation they say that the forest gives them not only food and shelter, warmth and clothing, but also affection (*ndura pisasu bendu, pisasu isa, pisasu ngombe; ndura ekondisu*). The intimacy of the relationship between the individual Mbuti and his forest godhead is most plainly seen in the incident described more fully in *The Forest People* (Chapter 15), where a youth was found dancing all by himself in the moonlight, singing a wordless song as he danced. When questioned as to why he was dancing alone, he answered, "I am not dancing alone, I am dancing with the forest, dancing with the moon."[3]

3 *Kanga me bi akilé: me bi na ndura, me bi na songé.*

Schebesta (1952, 303) refers to *songé* (moon) as being one of the net-hunting names for God, regarded as the creator of all things (1952, 305), particularly of man, which *songé* creates by means of menstrual blood. He does not, unfortunately, give more information or documentation on this interpretation, but there is no doubt that the moon is, to the Mbuti, an object of interest and (as seen above) affection, and at the same time in common discussion they do connect the moon with menstruation, and menstruation with fertility. I have myself not come across any instance of the moon being worshipped as such, unless this moonlight dance be regarded as worship, except in one song of the *molimo*, the words of which were:

Ema songé, ema, ema; okisu ema; pika'i.
Mother moon, mother, mother, hear us mother; come.

This is remarkably similar to a translation given by Bowra (1962, 70) of a song of the Gabon pygmies cited by Trilles (1945, 157).

Moon, O mother moon, O mother moon,
mother of living things,
Hear our voice, O mother moon!
O, mother moon, O mother moon,
Keep away the spirits of the dead,
Hear our voice, O mother moon,
O mother moon, O mother moon.

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THE LEGEND OF DOUBLE TRICKERY

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me ke nandura ka ba boki.
I went to the forest to collect honey.

me ke a'i, me ke a'i, me ke a'i.
I went, I went, I went.

me ke akurahwa, ku pia libo mangbo.
I went very far, beyond the big river.

moki li suanjoki. me oni neko kuma boki.
I heard the sound of bees. I saw up high the place of honey.

me lufudo, "toka bo nangoli; nde mendamo; nde boki ndamo."
I said. "Nobody has enclosed the tree with vine, it is mine; it is my honey."

me poki loka phelea, phelea bekbekbe'i.
I sharpened my ax, very sharp indeed.

me teningoli. ke kongi isa, me pisi isa subaso.
I cut a vine. I fanned my fire, and put the fire in my basket.

me pedi oda phangoli; me daphi, me daphi.
I began to climb; I climbed, I climbed.

boki neko kurahwa. nde boki, boki sandenengo, kanga piso.
The honey was very far. It was honey, real honey, not *apuma.*

me kidi. me boingoli, me liki. me pisi isa suba eboso.
I reached it. I fastened the vine, I sat. I put fire into the hole.

me lophi. me ki abi bekbekbe'i, me che'i banzoki.
I blew. I got much smoke, I drove out many bees.

me ko iti, me ko iti, me ko iti.
I chopped, I chopped, I chopped.

me ko iti, me mua kito, a mua pika na dodo.
While I was chopping I heard someone walking below.

"nu andea a mua pika peeha me?" nde mukpara ndamo.
"Who is walking below me?" It is my master.

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"a oki kueta mboki ndamo, a me beli." me wanzi nimbo.
"He heard me cutting my honey, he followed me." I began to sing.

me nimbi bekbekbei, akini melufu. kanga me oki.
I sang loudly, but he called me. I did not hear.

me nimbi, akini me kweti.
I sang, but I chopped.

me nimbi, "Ha! me kweti boki. me ko oka kapa'i akpara mamo."
I sang, "Ha! I am chopping honey to give to my *kpara*."

me kweti bisa, me kweti boka. boki a bi lenga'i.
I chopped slowly, I chopped honey. There was much honey.

akini me pisa depha subaso.
But I only put part of it in my basket.

me pisi ndetina a su soro kokomea.
The rest I put where the tree had two arms.

me nimbi, "Ah! boki a bi depha, me ka bokbu akpara mamo." me ki a dodo.
I sang, "Ah! There is only a little honey, I shall give it all to my *kpara*." I came down.

"Ah! mambuti mamo, me siye ema?" mubira a si pi so.
"Ah! My Mbuti, what are you doing here?" The MuBira looks at the basket.

"Ah! akpara mamo, me piki ka ba boki ndamo, akini me pati na che.
"Ah! My Master, I came to search for my honey, but I got only a little.

"me mua ka pa'i bokbu. me sia bo'u."
"I am going to give it all. I will stay empty."

"ue nde mambuti manza. me ka pa eboko mboye siki nanji."
"You are a good Mbuti. I shall give you bananas when you come to the village."

"Ah! akpara mamo, me lika nandura a ka ba boki, akini nde depha."
"Ah! My Master, I shall stay in the forest to search for honey, but there is little."

"nde mwaka sinana. nde kazi ndangbo."
"It is a bad year. It is hard work."

"ue sikia nanji na boki ndamo. me pati ndetina, me piki na'u."
"You go to the village with my honey. If I get more, I shall come with it."

akpara a bu boki ndamo, a siki nanji nda'e.
The *kpara* took my honey, he went to the village with it.

asibande a bi boki ndamo bokbu. ndandama nda'e!
He would say he had eaten all my honey. His stupidity!

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ake me daphi umand'o, me bu boki ngbokbu, kumande me pisibi.
I quickly climbed up again, I took all the honey from the place where I had put it.

me simi ya dodo a sia n'apa a kapa banama bame.
I came down to return to the camp and shared it with everyone.

me tambi, me tambi, me tambi. me kidi apua libo mangbo.
I walked, I walked, I walked, I arrived at the big river.

tokwaba a wanzi pika. me lufu. "ha! tudu a me pedi a me mandula? me sao mabo?"
Darkness began to settle. I said, "Ha! Is night catching me in the middle of the forest like this? What shall I do?"

me daphi kua me mangbo, me langi neko.
I climbed up into a big tree, I lay there.

ame mangondo moki liso. me oni kurahwa isa ebaré.
Halfway through the night I heard a sound and woke. I saw far away two firebrands.

"mondea na tamba kifa, na isa ebara bende? nde ketiba!"
"Who is walking in the middle of the night, with two firebrands? It is an evil spirit!"

me kobi nengo. m'oki liso kali.
I remained completely quiet. I heard a woman's voice.

"a miki mamo, miki mamo; miki mamo mu ma?" liso a tata, mozee nengo.
"Ah! My child, my child; where is my child?" It was the voice of my grandmother, a very old person.

me moboki nengo. "Ah! tatamua kaba me amemangondo? nde tata mamo nengo?"
I was very afraid. "Ah! My grandmother is looking for me in the middle of the night like this? Is it really my grandmother?"

"ah miki mamo mu ma? au moli a pedi, au a bungi?"
"Ah! Where is my child? Either a leopard has caught him or he has lost his way?"

me kobi nengo, akini isa ebaré akidi tina me.
I kept quiet completely, but the two firebrands came right up underneath the tree.

nde keti nengo, akini akeoki tatamamo.
It was truly an evil spirit, but it had turned into my grandmother.

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I sneezed. "Ah! My child is up in the tree?"

"e'i tata, me mu be'i. me ka bi boki tudaha a me pedi a phe."
"Yes, Grandmother, I am here. I was searching for honey but darkness caught me on the trail."

"Ah! miki, ue mesi sinana. ue a bia sisia abende neku, me toli akaba'o; me tondi mota'o. ue si sinana nengo. pisa boki ndamo."
"Ah! Child, you have done badly. When you did not return, I thought you were dead and I left to search for you; I found you strong. You have done very badly towards me. Give me my honey."

"ah! tata, nde tida'i; me kumbandi susia kumekadi."
"Ah! Grandmother, it is very heavy. I shall carry it for you, we shall return together."

"mbe, ueche todahwa; ue lika ma. me sia na boki ndamo. pikisa."
"Nonsense, you are afraid of the night. You stay here. I shall return with the honey. Give it."

me che'i nengo gunde me upi a bi keti.
I was very afraid, because I knew it was an evil spirit.

me maké boki na dodo. "pikasa ndetina, pikasa ndetina."
I threw some honey down. "Give me more, give me more."

me maké ndetina. "pikasa ndetina."
I threw down more. "Give me more."

"ndetina a munda, tata." "mbe, pikisa, miki masinana."
"There is no more, Grandmother." "Nonsense, give, my bad child."

me che'i nengo, me maké bokbui me lufu:
I was very afraid, I threw it all down; I said:

"e ngbokbu, tata, bo'a, ue ke, ndetina amunda. peda ue sia nda'o. me lika oma."
"That is all, Grandmother, take it, you go, there is no more. Take it and return to your place. I shall remain here."

"ebo. nde bonga'i, miki mamo. me siki a'o. ue likato."
"Good. It is good, my child. I shall return. You stay on."

"ue kato'e, tata."
"Go then, Grandmother."

me liki na siu, me bonji mané. mané a piki, me simia a dodo.
I sat with eyes, I waited for daylight. When daylight came I climbed down to the ground.

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me ka bi anga batu; anga munda.
I looked for footprints of humans. There were no footprints.

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"Ah!" me lufu, "nde keti mabobo. me si ndanza me ka boki bokbu. a bia mua me nengo."
"Ah!" I said, "It was an evil spirit, truly. I did well to throw down all my honey. It would have killed me completely."

akini, gunde me sibo.
But, empty-handed I return.

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THE LEGEND OF THE MBUTI PLANTATION

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mosa besu bambuti subua'ini eboko. mosa ma batu banji.
In olden times we Mbuti had bananas, before the people of the village.

batu banji baku biai eboko ndasu. su kangia'i.
The people of the village stole the bananas from us. We shared them.

besu bambuti sukonia ekasa, bakpara bua'i poko. Seyuma mayeli bendo.
We Mbuti took the leaves, the *kpara* took the roots. That was their trickery.

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samba ndaso nde mosa bindanza. akini bambongu pikiai dongasu.
Our plantations of old were good. But the elephants came and troubled us.

basudongia'isu. ba bumia'i tiko su.
They troubled us. They killed our plantations.

bambuti balufa'i, "su samabo? bambongu basu dongibé, babuniasu tiko ndasu."
The Mbuti said, "What shall we do? The elephants trouble us so and are killing our plantations."

mangesé, mangesé mangbo, alufa'i, "bambongu bapiké su lufua nabé."
An elder, a very old man indeed, said, "When the elephants come again, we shall talk with them."

bachahwa balufa'i, "ue semabo?" mangesé a lufa'i, "ue sipa, bamiki."
The youths said, "What will you say?" The old man said, "You wait, children."

bambongu bakidi. bawanji a lea'eboko bokbu. ba wanjia'i buna tiko.
The elephants came. They began to eat the bananas. They began to destroy the plantation.

bachahwa bache'i aka mangesé, balufua'i, "ombo, epa, bambongu bkidi; ba bunia tiko ndasu."
The youths were afraid and ran to the old man, saying, "Oh! Father, the elephants have come; they are destroying our plantation."

"ndanza. me mua ka totiambino. beningbokbu mu likana; nekobi anenengo." mangesé a ke a'i na tiko.
"Good. I shall go to chat with them. All of you stay here, completely quiet." The old man went to the plantation.

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a kamia'e nengo. engbue na dodo nengo. bambongu ba li sipi.
He cried greatly. He threw himself on the ground. The elephants looked at him.

balufu, "nde'i'i? bachahwa kabapiki dongasu, paka mangesé a piki ngamo nde ndanza sulea kobia nasu."
They said, "What is this? The youths have not come to trouble us. Only an old man has come. Good, we shall eat quietly."

balea ebokosu, bachahwa bakobia nengo apa.
They ate many bananas, the youths stayed very quiet in the camp.

mangesé a kami, "Ah! bamiki bamo bau. Ah! bamiki bamo buma?"
The old man cried, "Ah! my children, all are dead. Ah! my children, where are they?"

bambongu ba'oki, balufu'aka mangesé, "angbe ue ka mi? bachahwa buma? su lea tiko bokbu."
The elephants heard, they said to the old man, "Why are you crying like that? The youths are where? We shall eat the whole plantation."

mangesé a lufu, "lea, lea ngbokbu. bamiki bamo baku." a kami.
The old man said, "Eat, eat everything. My children are all dead." He continued crying.

bambongu balufu, "akini ue mua bamiki si angbe e'ebaku?"
The elephants said, "But you have many children, how did they die?"

mangesé a lufu, "nde keti, keti ma phele'a. a tambi na kongé ebaré nde bia nengo, sawa na ue.
The old man said, "It was an evil spirit, very evil indeed. It walked with two spears. It was very fat, like you.

"siku bokbu, me mengia na'u kapié eboko, keti a mua'e, a nia'e.
"Every day I sent someone to cut bananas, the evil spirit killed him, it ate him.

"makati i'o'elea', bamiki bamo bokbu. a siainbende nde tiko nda'e, batu bakidié, e muangbokbu.
"Now it has eaten all my children. It said it was its plantation and whoever came it would kill them all.

"ah! bamiki bamo baku bo'u. angbe'e keti kadongimbe tiko ndetina?
"Ah! My children have all died emptily. Why did the evil spirit not trouble some other plantation?

"angbe a loki tiko ndamo?" mangesé a kami, a ke.
"Why did it curse mine?" The old man cried, he went away.

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539 825 186 *bambongu balufu, "Ah! akini keti nde sinana, a loki tiko ndamané, su bua ka komanda; suke umana, kabe su mua."*
The elephants said, "Ah! But if the spirit is that bad, and has cursed the plantation, we had better go elsewhere; let us go quickly, before it kills us."

gunde bambongu bua sopilabatu bananji, bache'i baketi bobo.
Because elephants are like people of the village, they are very afraid of spirits.

ba ke, ba ke, kurahwa. mangesé e oki bamiki bokbu.
They went, they went very far. The old man called all his children.

a lufu, "bambongu ka ba piké noma. ba bia sisia kuma keti masinana.
He said, "The elephants will not come back again. They think this is a place full of bad spirits.

"su likia kobia nasu tiko ndasu.
"We shall remain quietly in our plantation.

"batu betina bunda basudonga."
"Nobody else will bother us."

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was neither. Everyone ate his fill as and when he pleased, a couple of the older men saying they would wait until the youngsters had finished before they ate. But they did not wait for long. I was told, however, that everyone *had* to eat, just as no adult male was allowed to sleep but *had* to sing while molimo singing was in progress. Apparently one of the greatest crimes that a Pygmy male can commit, if not the greatest, is to be found asleep when the molimo is singing. One of the men stood up, and miming as all Pygmies love to do, he showed how they used to search for sleeping men, a spear under each arm, and how if they found one they would spear him in the stomach and kill him completely and for ever. I was told that then his body would be buried under the kumamolimo and nobody would be allowed to mention his death, even to remark on his absence. The women would be told that the molimo itself, the great animal of the forest, had carried off one of their number, but like the men they would ask no questions and would never again mention the missing man.

The molimo was often referred to as "the animal of the forest," and the women were supposed to believe that it really was an animal, and that to see it would bring death. That of course is why they were all bundled off to bed with the children before the trumpet was ever brought into camp. And even when it *was* brought in it was often shielded by a number of youths so that if any woman should happen to look, she would see nothing. The animal sounds it produced were certainly realistic, but I wondered what the women thought when it sang. What kind of animal was it that one moment could make such threatening sounds, and the next instant sing more beautifully than anything else in the whole forest?

I remembered again Ausu's saying that the only important thing about the trumpet was the fact that it had a good voice and could sing well. I was reminded of the Pygmy legend of the Bird with the Most Beautiful Song. This bird was found by a young boy who

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heard such a Beautiful Song that he had to go and see who was singing. When he found the Bird he brought it back to the camp to feed it. His father was annoyed at having to give food to the Bird, but the son pleaded and the Bird was fed. The next day the Bird sang again; it sang the Most Beautiful Song in the Forest, and again the boy went to it and brought it back to feed it. This time the father was even more angered, but once again he gave in and fed the Bird. The third day (most Pygmy stories repeat themselves at least three times) the same thing happened. But this time the father took the Bird from his son and told his son to go away. When his son had left, the father killed the Bird, the Bird with the Most Beautiful Song in the Forest, and with the Bird he killed the Song, and with the Song he killed himself and he dropped dead, completely dead, dead for ever.

There are other legends about song, all telling how important it is, and I wondered just why. I looked at the others sitting with me around the kumamolimo. The flames from the fire flickered, lighting up the serious faces, shining brightly in their large, honest eyes. Some gazed straight into the fire, others leaned back and looked up into the trees as they sang. A few lay down on their hunting nets, but they were awake and they sang with the rest. Then I saw that Makubasi had his infant son on his lap, holding the boy tightly against him, wrapped in his powerful arms, rocking backward and forward. He was singing quietly, with his mouth up against his son's ear. The words of the song, like the words of most molimo songs, were few. They simply said, "The Forest is Good."

The Pygmies seemed bound by few set rules. There was a general pattern of behavior to which everyone more or less conformed, but with great latitude given and taken. Even on this occasion, when all women and children were supposed to be abed, if Makubasi felt like getting his son and singing to him at the kumamolimo, nobody objected or thought anything of it. Possibly this was because the